

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MUNICH 0419

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FOR EUR ARMITAGE

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, UR
SUBJECT: BUKOVSKY MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT

REF: STATE 029246

1. BACKGROUND: BUKOVSKY HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE CONSIDERS WORK OF RL, BBC, VOA AND EUTSCHE WELLE IMPORTANT BECAUSE THESE RADIOS FACILITATE DISSEMINATION OF "SAMIZDAT" WITHIN USSR AND BECAUSE THEY ARE "SOLE SOURCE OF INFORMATION THE SOVIET PEOPLE HAVE." IN PERSONAL MEETING WITH RL DIRECTOR, HE CHARACTERIZED RL AS "OF COLOSSAL IMPORTANCE." HE BELIEVES THAT AS RESULT OF DETENTE AND HELSINKI AGREEMENTS, EXISTENCE OF THESE STATIONS HAS BEEN THREATENED.

2. BUKOVSKY IS ESEPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT RL BECAUSE HE BELIEVES ITS CURRENT POLICY GUIDELINES ARE NO RPT NO DIFFERENT IN SPIRIT AND PUROPSE THAN INSTRUCTIONS FROM SOVIET MVD. HE HAS PREPARED POINT BY POINT ANALYSIS OF CURRENT (DECEMBER 1, 1976) RFE/RL PROGRAM POLICY GUIDELINES, FOCUSING PARTICULARLY ON THE ELEVEN "RESTRAINTS" (SEE PP. 5 AND 6). BUKOVSKY HAS TAKEN SPECIAL EXCEPTION TO GUIDELINE NO. 3 -- AVOID-CONFIDENTIAL

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DANCE OF PROGRAMMING WHOSE CONTENT COULD LEGITIMATELY BE CONSTRUED AS INFLAMMATORY OR CONDUCTIVE TO IRREDENTISM -- AND NO. 4 -- AVOIDANCE OF MATERIAL WHICH COULD REASONABLY BE CONSTRUED AS INCITEMENT TO REVOLT OR SUPPORT FOR ILLEGAL AND VIOLENT ACTION. RL HAS BROADCAST CRITICISMS OF RL "RESTRAINTS" WHICH BUKOVSKY MADE AT ANGLO-AERMCIAN PRESS CLUB IN PARIS.

3. BUKOVSKY BELIEVES OPINIONS OF THE "NEW" (THIRD) EMIGRATION FROM THE USSR, I.E. THOSE EMIGRANTS WHO LEFT THE USSR AFTER CIRCA 1968, HAVE A SPECIAL RELEVANCE TO SOVIET CITIZENS WHO HAVE RETHOUGHT OR ARE NOW RE-THINKING THEIR VALUES. HE IS AT LEAST GENERALLY AWARE OF RECENT DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN REPRESENTATIVES OF "OLD" AND "NEW" EMIGRATION IN RL'S RUSSIAN SERVICE.

4. ANALYSIS: BUKOVSKY'S PERCEPTION OF RFE/RL PROGRAM POLICY GUIDELINES HAS BEEN STRONGLY CONDITIONED BY HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCES AS A DISSIDENT INTELLECTUAL AND POLITICAL PRISONER. HE IS KEENLY AWARE OF METHODS BY WHICH MEDIA IN USSR ARE CONTROLLED. HE SEEMS, HOWEVER, TO MAKE TACIT ASSUMPTION THAT TRUE MEDIA FREEDOM IS TANTAMOUNT TO THE ABSENCE OF ALL RESTRAINTS AND GUIDELINES. HE HAS GOTTEN IMPRESSION THAT PRESENT RFE/RL GUIDELINES REPRESENT STEP AWAY FROM RL COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION.

5. BUKOVSKY HAS INDICATED THAT HE WAS NOT RPT NOT ABLE TO LISTEN TO RL WHILE IN PRISON THESE PAST SIX YEARS. HIS VIEWS OF RL ARE NOT, THEREFORE, BASED ON FIRST-HAND ACQUAINTANCE WITH RL PROGRAMMING.

6. SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS:

--FREEDOM IS NOT LICENSE AND RL, LIKE ALL WESTERN MEDIA, HAS ALWAYS OPERATED UNDER PROGRAM POLICY GUIDELINES.
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N.Y. "TIMES", FOR EXAMPLE, HAS POLICY SUMMARIZED BY THE SLOGAN "ALL THE NEWS THAT'S FIT TO PRINT."

--THE MOST CONVINCING EVIDENCE OF RL'S LONGSTANDING COMMITMENT TO FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND DEMOCRACY IS THE RL PROGRAM ITSELF. HOPEFULLY YOU WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME FAMILIAR IN DEPTH AND OVER TIME WITH RL PROGRAMS.

--WE ARE CONVINCED THAT A CLOSER, MORE COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT RL'S PROGRAMMING WILL BRING YOU TO CONCLUSION THAT RL IS CHAMPIONING THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY YOU YOURSELF STAND FOR. BETTS

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